

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly newscast

May 24th 2013

Lessons prepared by Justine Light & Barbara Edmondson

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as, an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca

<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

destroy (to make unusable)	rubble (broken pieces)	suburb (area outside of downtown)
ripped off (take off with force)	twister (tornado)	knocked down (to push over)
huddle (to gather close together)	struck (hit)	scour (to clear or remove everything)

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

concrete slabs – cement pads on which houses are built (they have no basements)

EF5 - Enhanced Fujita scale rates the strength of a tornado based on how much damage it does. The scale goes from EF0 – EF5.

1. In 1987 there was a _____ in Edmonton. The tornado _____ a trailer park and _____ many homes.
2. The strong winds of a tornado can _____ the roof of a home.
3. The _____ left by the fire had to be removed before we could rebuild.
4. When the power went out we _____ together to keep warm.
5. My mother asked me to _____ the bathroom before our guests arrived.
6. I live in a _____ outside Calgary so it takes me an hour to get downtown.
7. The strong wind _____ the signs outside of the store yesterday.

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. There was a giant tornado in Oklahoma USA that killed _____.	a) 24 children b) 24 people
2. One elementary school was _____ in the suburb of Moore.	a) reduced to rubble b) the focus of the media
3. The tornado _____ and _____ of the Plaza Towers Elementary school.	a) knocked down the roof / ripped off the walls b) ripped off the roof / knocked down the walls
4. The students and teachers _____.	a) gathered together in the playground b) huddled in bathrooms and hallways
5. The tornado _____ their concrete slabs.	a) pulled homes off b) pushed the schools off
6. Monday's tornado was _____ km wide and traveled _____ km across Oklahoma.	a) 27 / 2 b) 2 / 27

Discussion Question

Have you ever experienced a tornado before? What should you do if there is a dangerous weather in the city?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

The words below are from the second news story. Choose the group of synonyms (words with similar meaning that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
	1) expensive	a) decrease smaller amount less
	2) confusing	b) prices cost amount
	3) rates	c) pricey a lot of money costly
	4) demand	d) hard to understand difficult strange
	5) reduction	e) agreed to decided passed
	6) depending on	f) caused by result of connected to
	7) approved	g) request want need

Extra definition to help you understand the reading:

according to –what is said or agreed

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true** or **false**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ Calgary has the least expensive parking in Canada.
2. ____ A new plan will set the price of parking based on demand
3. ____ High demand for parking in an area will lead to a rise of 50 cents in the price per hour.
4. ____ Low demand for parking in an area will lead to a decrease of 25 cents per hour.
5. ____ Once the parking rates are decided they will never be changed.

Discussion Question

Do you ever park in downtown Calgary? Do you think it is a good idea to make parking more expensive during times of high demand?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word	Definition
	1. seek	a) to advertise or publicly support
	2. municipal	b) to do something without being asked
	3. politician	c) to look for
	4. promote	d) to decrease the amount or occurrence of something
	5. homelessness	e) acceptance
	6. reduce	f) having to do with a city or town
	7. redevelopment	g) when people vote for someone or something
	8. approval	h) to recreate a space to be more useable or modern
	9. voluntarily	i) a person who works for a government
	10. elections	j) the condition of having no roof over one's head

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

term in office – the number of years one person can be leader before having a new election

open up the door – to provide new opportunities

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. Who is the Mayor of Edmonton?
2. What did the Mayor recently announce?
3. How old is he, and how many years has he been the mayor of Edmonton?
4. Why did the mayor say he was leaving office?
5. What did the mayor of Edmonton do for the city while he was in office?
6. What is he the first mayor to do in 45 years?

Discussion Question

If you were the mayor of your city what changes would you like to make?

Language Focus

Identifying phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs – two words together that act as one verb. Phrasal verbs are most commonly made up of a verb and a preposition. Phrasal verbs often confuse learners because the words together can have a different meaning than the two separate words they are made up of.

For example:

Work out - to exercise

- to find a solution to a problem

The word *work* means to use force to produce or change something. The word *out* is a preposition showing the opposite of in. Together these two words have two very different meanings.

Listen to the first story in the news this week. Can you hear these two examples of phrasal verbs? Both of these phrasal verbs have two different definitions. Which meaning is used in the story this week? How can you tell?

Rip(ped) off - to take off/remove with force

- to take money from someone by cheating or lying/to steal

Knock(ed) down - to push something over on the ground

- to insult someone (or what they do) and make them feel sad

Look at the following phrasal verbs. Do you know what they mean? Try to guess.

Answers are in the appendix

1. ask around – _____

2. break up – _____

3. bring *someone* down – _____

4. carry on – _____

5. call off – _____

6. chip in – _____

7. dress up – _____

8. drop in/by – _____

9. drop out – _____

10. find out – _____

11. get along/on with – _____

12. get back – _____

13. get together – _____

14. give up – _____

15. grow up – _____

16. hang on – _____

17. let *someone* down – _____

18. look forward to – _____

19. pass away – _____

20. run into *someone* – _____

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

	MAY 24 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, this is Carla Beynon. You're listening to Learning English with CBC for May 24 th .	0:00
Story 1	A giant tornado in Oklahoma killed 24 people, destroyed many homes and reduced one elementary school to rubble, killing seven children inside. The tornado struck in Moore, a suburb of Oklahoma City. Search-and-rescue teams focused on the Plaza Towers Elementary School, where the storm ripped off the roof, knocked down walls and destroyed the playground as students and teachers huddled in hallways and bathrooms. Homes were pulled off their concrete slabs and there were large areas of red earth where the tornado scoured the land down to the soil. Monday's tornado travelled 27 kilometres and was 2 kilometres wide at points. It was a top-of-the-scale EF5 twister with winds of at least 320 kilometres per hour.	0:08
Story 2	Calgary has the most expensive parking in Canada and it could soon become the most confusing as well. Under a new plan suggested by a city council committee, parking rates will be based on demand. High demand for parking spots in one area will mean rates will go up by 25 cents an hour. But lower demand will cause a 25-cent reduction. To make it really interesting, those rates will change depending on the time of day. Rates will be reviewed every year and changed according to usage. The new rate plan goes to city council next week and would take effect July 1 if it is approved.	01:05
Story 3	Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel says he will not seek a fourth term in office when municipal elections are held this fall. The 67-year-old municipal politician has been on city council for 12 years, nine of them as mayor. Mandel says it's time to open up the door to new leadership. During his time as Mayor, Mandel worked to try to reduce homelessness, and promoted growth of the city's LRT system, the new Art Gallery of Alberta, redevelopment of the downtown airport land and construction of a downtown arena. The arena was given final approval last week. Mandel is the first Edmonton mayor in 45 years to leave office voluntarily.	01:48

Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

1. In 1987 there was a twister in Edmonton. The tornado struck a trailer park and destroyed many homes.
2. The strong winds of a tornado can rip off the roof of a home.
3. The rubble left by the fire had to be removed before we could rebuild.
4. When the power went out we huddled together to keep warm.
5. My mother asked me to scour the bathroom before our guests arrived.
6. I live in a suburb outside Calgary so it takes me an hour to get downtown.
7. The strong wind knocked down the signs outside of the store yesterday.

Listening

1. There was a giant tornado in Oklahoma USA that killed _____.	a) 24 children b) 24 people
2. One elementary school was _____ in the suburb of Moore.	a) reduced to rubble b) the focus of the media
3. The tornado _____ and _____ of the Plaza Towers Elementary school.	a) knocked down the roof / ripped off the walls b) ripped off the roof / knocked down the walls
4. The students and teachers _____.	a) gathered together in the playground b) huddled in bathrooms and hallways
5. The tornado _____ their concrete slabs.	a) pulled homes off b) pushed the schools off
6. Monday's tornado was _____ km wide and traveled _____ km across Oklahoma.	a) 27 / 2 b) 2 / 27

News story 2

Vocabulary

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
c	1) expensive	a) decrease smaller amount less
d	2) confusing	b) prices cost amount
b	3) rates	c) pricey a lot of money costly
g	4) demand	d) hard to understand difficult strange

a	5) reduction	e) agreed to decided passed
f	6) depending on	f) caused by result of connected to
e	7) approved	g) request want need

Listening

1. F Calgary has the least expensive parking in Canada.
2. T A new plan will set the price of parking based on demand
3. F High demand for parking in an area will lead to a rise of 50 cents in the price per hour.
4. T Low demand for parking in an area will lead to a decrease of 25 cents per hour.
5. F Once the parking rates are decided they will never be changed.

News story 3

Vocabulary

Answer	Word	Definition
c	1. seek	a) to advertise or publicly support
f	2. municipal	b) to do something without being asked
i	3. politician	c) to look for
a	4. promote	d) to decrease the amount or occurrence of something
j	5. homelessness	e) acceptance
d	6. reduce	f) having to do with a city or town
h	7. redevelopment	g) when people vote for someone or something
e	8. approval	h) to recreate a space to be more useable or modern
b	9. voluntarily	i) a person who works for a government
g	10. elections	j) the condition of having no roof over one's head

Listening

1. Who is the Mayor of Edmonton? *Stephen Mandel*
2. What did the Mayor recently announce? *He announced that he will not see a fourth term in office.*
3. How old is he, and how many years has he been the mayor of Edmonton?
Mandel is 67 years old and has been the mayor of Edmonton for 9 years.

4. Why did the mayor say he was leaving office? *He says it's time to open up the door to new leadership.*
5. What did the mayor of Edmonton do for the city while he was in office? *During his time as Mayor, Mandel worked to try to reduce homelessness, and promoted growth of the city's LRT system, the new Art Gallery of Alberta, redevelopment of the downtown airport land and construction of a downtown arena.*
6. What is he the first mayor to do in 45 years? *He is the first mayor in Edmonton in 45 years to leave office voluntarily.*

Language focus

1. ask around – to ask many people the same questions
2. break up – when a couple ends their relationship
3. bring *someone* down – to make someone feel sad
4. carry on – to continue doing something; to cry or complain about something
5. call off – to cancel
6. chip in – to help out; to give money towards something
7. dress up – to wear nice, fancy clothes for an event
8. drop in/by – to visit without a plan
9. drop out – to quit something (school or a competition)
10. find out – to learn something new
11. get along/on with – to like or be friendly with someone
12. get back – to return
13. get together – to meet
14. give up – to stop trying
15. grow up – to become an adult
16. hang on – to wait a short time
17. let *someone* down – to disappoint someone
18. look forward to – to be excited about something that will happen in the future
19. pass away – to die
20. run into *someone* – to meet surprisingly/ not planned